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Need to accord approval to the proposal for setting up of six desalination plants in Lakshadweep.

MOHAMMED FAIZAL (LAKSHADWEEP): Thank you very much, Chairman, Sir. Today I was very keenly listening to the speech of hon. Prime Minister and he was emphatically reiterating that we should try to give more importance to the essential requirements of our country. All my learned friends were talking about brining water for agriculture and all those things but I am talking about water for existence in my constituency, Lakshadweep.

You may be aware that Lakshadweep is surrounded by saline water. The fresh water storage, which is ground water, is diminishing day by day due to increase in population. The saline water has already made its stream to the underground water. Now the situation has reached such an alarming level that 45 per cent of the area of the island, precisely six islands, are completely saline and not fit for drinking. People are very much suffering. Taking into consideration this issue, the Lakshadweep Administration has taken up the matter with the Drinking Water Ministry. So many times, Ministry of Drinking Water returned the file due to one or the other small issues. Even when I came into this temple of democracy, I met Shri Nitin Gadkari when he was holding the charge of Drinking Water Ministry. I met him and even I met the Prime Minister Narendra Modi *ji*. The day before yesterday, I met Chaudhary Birender Singh who is now holding the charge.

So my request to the Government is this. We have proposed for starting of six Low Temperature Thermal Desalination (LTTD) plants which can purify the saline water and bring in potable water. The six-island project is costing around Rs. 280 crore. I would urge upon the Government to kindly look into the matter. This is a matter of existence of people living there. Kindly sanction those six plants as quickly as possible. Thank you very much.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Shri Rajeev Satav and Shri Chandra Prakash Joshi are permitted to associate with the issue raised by Mohammed Faizal.